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RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY LOME 0559
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1692
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0706
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 NDJAMENA 000499

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KDEM PGOV PHUM PREL CD
SUBJECT: CHAD: IMPORTANT JUNCTURE IN INTERNAL POLITICAL
DYNAMIC

REF: A. NDJAMENA 446
     ¶B. NDJAMENA 457

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The ongoing political dialogue in Chad
has come to a crunch point. According to a senior official
who serves as go-between in the dialogue, several key areas
of disagreement remain, but each one is surmountable. A
prominent oppositionist has removed himself from the
dialogue, but he is an inveterate spoiler. After years of
false promises, the public is cynical. People know that the
real test would be an iron-clad promise from Deby that he
would step down in 2011 -- which is not going to happen.
However, the more moderate opposition coalition appears still
to be united and committed to the dialogue. The timing is
propitious, as Deby is only beginning the second year of his
term and the rebels are quiet for the moment. The big
question mark is Deby himself. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador has had a series of meetings over
the past two weeks with opposition and government officials
to get to grips with progress, or lack of progress, in the
political dialogue discussed in ref A. A blow-by-blow
account -- if too hopeful -- was provided June 13 by
Abderaman Djasnabaille, Secretary of State at the Ministry of
Interior. Djasnabaille spent years in Paris in the Chadian
oppositionist community, but Deby lured him back. His
current official responsibilities (he has moved through three
cabinet portfolios over the past year) cover territorial
administration and decentralization, and Deby has tapped him
as a point man in the dialogue. Djasnabaille said that he
felt huge pressure from both sides, his sympathies lying with
the moderate opposition, who mistrust him.

Agreed

¶3. (SBU) Djasnabaille said that he was in the process of
putting together a draft agreement to be submitted to the
ruling party (MPS), opposition coaltion (CPDC), and European
Union (as mediator/facilitator) next week. Several issues
that had been a focus of sharp disagreement have now,
according to Djasnabaille, been brought to resolution, thanks

in no small part to technical advice and energetic
intervention by the EU. The parties have now agreed that the
electoral commission will have equal representation from the
government-allied and opposition parties. Procedures for
voting by Chadians living outside of Chad will be tightened
up (Chadians abroad will have to give proof of citizenship
and be registered at an embassy or consulate). Prodedures
for voting by nomads will be tightened up (nomads will now
only have one day in which to vote, and will only be able to
vote in five districts). Voting procedures at voting booths
will be streamlined and made more transparent (single,
uniform, secret ballot).

Agreed, in Principle

¶4. (SBU) More controversially, Djasnabaille claimed that all
sides agreed on the need for both a general census (total
population, including the external Chadian population) and
electoral census (registration of voters). The last census
was in 1993, and today no one knows the total population or
how much it has changed from region to region or district to
district. The mandate of the present legislature, last
elected in 2001, has been extended twice and was due to
expire at the end of this year. It would have to be extended
again. Djasnabaille said that extending the mandate of a
discredited National Assembly was regrettable but necessary.
The dialoguers remained divided over the time required for
conducting a census -- a technical issue and solvable.
Djasnabaille thought that a census would most likely require
two and one-half years. (Comment: President Deby told the
Ambassador June 4, ref B, that he would not accept extension

of the current legislature. Other interlocutors have
suggested that, if Deby is adamant on this point, there would
still be room for compromise: a near-term voter registration
which would be redone properly once the census was complete.
End Comment.)

¶5. (SBU) Djasnabaille advocated two and a half years for
another reason: It would permit the installation of
professional personnel at the district level.
Professionalization of territorial administration was a long
process, he acknowledged, but even a marginally more
professional administration would be helpful in promoting
electoral transparency. All dialoguers agreed on the
terrible state of local administration, rife with old
soldiers who could barely read or write.

¶6. (SBU) Djasnabaille said that the single most contentious
element in the dialogue was the formation of a government of
consensus or national unity. He said that all sides had
accepted the idea in principle, but the hard part was getting
down to naming the prime minister and his cabinet -- who
would be on, who would be off, and who would have the right
to name the cabinet: Deby or the dialoguers? These points
were not yet decided, he said.

Not Agreed, but Solvable

¶7. (SBU) A key requirement of the CPDC is the formal
establishment of an international follow-up committee, to
investigate on a continuing basis compliance with promises
made by the government. Djasnabaille said that President
Deby appeared to be negative on this point, while everyone
else, including the government representatives in the
dialogue understood that it was a legitimate requirement.
The EU representative in Ndjamena, who had been so active in
the dialogue, should have a formalized role, and perhaps
others, although none had yet participated actively.

¶8. (SBU) Another CPDC requirement is that the final accord
be signed only by the parties participating in the dialogue.
The government has insisted that all legally-consituted

parties sign. Most of those parties are one-man bands, many
of them beholden to the government, so the CPDC objects.
Djasnabaille said this point remained unresolved. However,
the EU representative told the Ambassador June 12 that the
government was likely to accept a compromise, under which
only the dialoguers would sign, but all parties would be
present at the ceremony.

¶9. (SBU) The final unresolved demand by the CPDC is that
there be a formal overture to the Chadian rebels to be a part
of the dialogue and its follow-on process. Djasnabaille said
that the process would indeed need to become more inclusive,
not only the rebels but also civil-society leaders. But, he
said, the government would not accept delaying formalizing an
accord in an effort to rope in armed rebels.

Former President Goukouni's Initiative

¶10. (SBU) The Ambassador asked Djasnabaille where the
reconciliation effort led by former President Goukouni
Weddeye stood. Djasnabaille said he had been present at
Deby's meeting with Weddeye in Libreville some weeks ago.
Deby had encouraged Weddeye to get on with reconciliation
with rebels as rapidly as possible and to return to Chad.
Goukouni said he would need time to contact all the rebels
and would wait on returning to Chad. Djasnabaille then
visited Goukouni in Algeria. Some of the rebels were now
willing to reconcile (Djasnabaille did not specify).
Djasnabaille outlined a hopeful timetable: Finish the
dialogue by the end of June, sign the accord, Goukouni would
oversee reconciliation with some of the rebels in July,

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perhaps again in Libreville, and Goukouni would return at
last to Chad.

¶11. (SBU) Other sources are much less sanguine about
Goukouni's initiative. President Deby is said not to be
expecting these efforts to get anywhere. Goukouni's family
members tell us the former president has no intention of
returning to Chad for fear of being used by Deby to provide a
false show of support for his regime.

Yorongar Opts Out

¶12. (SBU) Meanwhile, on June 12, maverick oppositionist
Ngarlejy Yorongar announced that he was pulling out of the
dialogue. He addressed his bitterest barbs not to Deby or
the representatives of the ruling party in the dialogue but
to Jean Alingue, leader of a party within the CPDC, who has
served as dialogue chairman. He also bitterly criticized the
EU representative for pushing too hard for a compromise,
particularly on the issue of expanding the dialogue to
include the rebels. (Comment: Yorongar's defection is not a
deal-killer. He has a long history as grandstander and
spoiler, which plays well to his constituency of angry and
frustrated Chadians. He no doubt calculates that the
dialogue is bound to fail and he will reap the benefit of
having remained pure. End Comment.)

Much Room for Gloom

¶13. (SBU) Chadians are extremely cynical about this
dialogue, across the board and rightly so. There have been
many false promises about democracy to Chad. Deby's reneging
on his 2001 promise to leave office in 2006 was the greatest
blow. The only way that Deby could cut to the quick of the
cynicism would be to announce now that he will never run
again. Even that promise would be scarcely believed -- and
he is not going to make that promise. Still, this dialogue
is the most serious effort toward democracy that Chad has
seen for several years. The time for it is propitious,
partly for the very reason that Deby is not being pressured

on the issue of what happens in 2011. It is also propitious
because the East is quiet for the moment. It is a deceptive
quiet, as Chad's security remains very fragile, but it is
enough of a quiet to provide some political breathing room.
Chad, and Deby, need to get started somewhere, and if it is
not now, it is not likely to be anytime soon.

¶14. Minimize Considered.
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